



ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (AEN) POLICY

Terence MacSwiney Community College/ Gaelcholáiste Mhic Shuibhne

This policy was formulated to support the inclusion of children with Additional Educational Needs within our school setting

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POLICY DEVELOPMENT MEMBERS

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SECTION A: SCHOOL ARRANGEMENTS

Introductory Statement

Terence MacSwiney Community College/ Gaelcholáiste Mhic Shuibhne (TMS/GMS) values the abilities and achievements of all its pupils and is committed to providing the best possible environment for learning for each pupil. We recognise the entitlement of all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum, and we strive to be a fully inclusive school. In September 2021, we opened an ASD Special Class as part of the mainstream school and will open a second in September 2022.

RATIONALE

- Large numbers of children present with Additional Educational Needs (AEN) within the school.
- It is considered necessary to develop a school AEN policy to comply with legislation and Department of Education and Science circulars.
- To assist parents in making an informed decision in relation to the enrolment of their child in our school.
- Terence MacSwiney Community College/ Gaelcholáiste Mhic Shuibhne hopes to serve all the students in our community, without prejudice. We welcome all students and acknowledge that diversity will enrich our school.

AIMS

- To ensure that all AEN students have access to a broad and balanced curriculum appropriate to their needs.
- To outline procedures and practices to be followed in relation to pupils with AEN.
- To outline our whole school approach to the teaching / learning of pupils with AEN.
- To enable students with disabilities to share with their peers as complete an educational experience as possible.
- To establish communication structures for the involvement of parents of pupils with AEN.

We recognise that many pupils will have Additional Educational Needs at some time during their school life. In implementing this policy, we believe pupils will be helped to overcome their difficulties. Whilst many factors contribute to the range of difficulties experienced by some children, we believe that much can be done to overcome them by parents, teachers and pupils working together.

Definition of Additional Educational Needs

The definition of AEN as set out in section 1 of the EPSEN Act 2004 (Education for Person with Additional Educational Needs) is as follows:

" AEN means in relation to a person, a restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability or any other condition which results in a person learning differently from a person without that condition.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Principal: Phil O’Flynn
- Deputy-Principal: Neil Creedon
- National Educational Psychologist Service (NEPS): Aoife Cassidy
- SENO: Orlaith Daly
- CAST Coordinator: Grainne Carroll (Curriculum Access Support Team)
- Assistant CAST Coordinator: Janet Gregan
- Guidance Counsellor: Noel Kearney
- Resource/ Learning Support Teachers: Enda O’Connell, Janet Gregan, Yvonne Calnan, Heather Keane, Sorcha Nagle and Colum Forde.
- Traveller Support Mentor: Ciaran McCarthy
- Special Needs Assistants: Trudy O’Halloran, Ruth O’Brien, Laura Byrne, Ann Marie Keniry. Kate O’Shea, Carrie Harvey, Paula Buckley.
- Student Support Team: Phil O’Flynn, Grainne Carroll, SNAs, Mandy O’Regan, Heather Keane, Noel Kearney, Ingrid O’Riordan (SCP), John O’Mahony (Foróige), Ann Masterson (JCSP Librarian), Eugene Sheehan (HSCL), Year Heads.
- School Programme Co-ordinator: Deirdre Bevan
- JCSP Librarian: Ann Masterson
- School Completion Coordinator: Ingrid O’Riordan
- NBSS Behaviour for Learning Teacher: Mandy O’Regan

Role of Board of Management

- Ensuring that provision of services to AEN pupils is of a high standard.
- Ensuring that AEN pupils are fully involved in school activities.

Role of Principal

- To ensure that the school conforms to all relevant legislation.
- To promote inclusion of all children through the school structures (both curricular and support structures).
- To ensure that the special accommodations are sought for all relevant students to provide them with the best learning environment possible.
- To promote, as per mission statement, quality education and care of all students.

Role of SENO

The SENO's role involves working with the Principal and the Board of Management to determine the strategic development of the policy. Other responsibilities include coordinating the provision for pupils with AEN, liaising with and giving advice to teachers, managing SNAs, overseeing pupils’ records, liaising with parents, making a contribution to in-service, linking with external agencies in order to raise the achievement of children with AEN.

Role of CAST Coordinator

The role of the CAST Coordinator is to co-ordinate the work of the Curriculum Access Support Team. To liaise and co-ordinate involvement with external bodies and support agencies re: AEN e.g. NBSS, SCP (School Completion Programme), Foróige, NEWB, SENO, HSCL, Resource Department and other outside agencies - visiting teachers for the Deaf, Blind and Disability unit (UCC). To promote and develop the potential of particularly able students. To disseminate information to teachers regarding AEN pupils.

Role of Assistant AEN Coordinator

- Assists in the co-ordination of AEN provision.
- Liaise with SNAs organising NCSE allocations, timetabling SNA support.

Role of Resource Teacher/ Learning support

- Assist in assessments of pupils
- Maintain records of work with AEN pupils, liaise with parents.
- Liaise with subject teachers re: AEN pupil
- Use SENO/ Psychologists recommendations as the basis for their work with AEN pupils.
- Team Teaching
- Paired Reading
- Various Numeracy/ Literacy Initiatives.

Role of Subject Teacher

- All teachers are teachers of pupils with AEN. Any subject teacher may identify pupils who are giving cause for concern by informing the CAST Coordinator or Guidance Counsellor.
- Subject teachers are to be familiar with the school's AEN Policy and on how students are assessed, identified as AEN, and how they are provided for.
- Subject teachers work with the AEN Team to collect information on pupils.
- They work with the AEN Team to devise a plan of action to help pupils progress.
- They develop relationships with parents to help this progress.

Role of Co-ordinator ASD Special Class

The Co-ordinator organises the running of the ASD special class. They liaise with parents, teachers and pupils to support the pupils in their learning.

Role of Special Needs Assistants

Special Needs Assistants are recruited specifically to assist schools in providing the necessary non-teaching services to pupils with assessed Educational Needs. Their duties are assigned by the Principal acting on behalf of the Board of Management. Their work is supervised either by the Principal or another teacher as determined by the Principal. Those duties include tasks of a non-teaching nature (see appendix 1)

Role of Guidance Counsellor

The Guidance Counsellor plays a central Role in gathering information on AEN pupils and their needs. Special Accommodations for state exams are applied for and other supports for pupils are organised. Parents and psychologists are met to arrange educational assessments and the necessary supports are applied for from the Department of Education.

Role of HSCL (Home School Community Liaison)

The aim of this scheme is to maximise the active participation of children in learning. Partnership is established between Home, School, and the Community. Classes for parents are provided and a Parents' Room set up. A close relationship is built up through home visits and programmes for parents. This close relationship facilitates better provision of care for AEN pupils.

Role of School Completion Team

The Le Cheile School Completion Team works in local primary schools as well as in Terence MacSwiney Community College/ Gaelcholáiste Mhic Shuibhne (TMS/GMS). Their aim is to reduce early school-leaving. This support helps AEN pupils in their levels of attainment in school. Initiatives include one-to-one work, group work and in-class provision. There are Breakfast Clubs, Lunchtime clubs and parental support programmes. The team is very involved in the Transition Programme from Primary school to Post-primary. They are also involved in the Traveller Mentoring Programme.

Role of NBSS (National Behaviour Support Service/BFL)

The NBSS supports students in their learning so that they are enabled to fulfill their potential and achieve success at school. The NBSS Team liaise with outside agencies to ensure every support is availed of.

Role of NEPS

The National Educational Psychological Service supports the personal, social and educational development of all children through the application of psychological theory and practice in education.

Role of NEWB

The National Educational Welfare Board is made up of the School Completion Programme, Home School Community Liaison, and the Educational welfare service. It works to secure better educational outcomes for pupils.

Role of School Programme Co-ordinator

The Co-ordinator works to improve the educational achievement of all pupils by organising activities that motivate pupils to learn. Co-operative Learning and Team-Building, are all encouraged. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's learning. A relationship with potential employers is also developed.

Role of JCSP Librarian

The JCSP Librarian works with school staff to improve Literacy levels of pupils. Reading and writing programmes are implemented and a range of fun activities are held to encourage student learning.

Role of Traveller Support Mentor

As part of their work in supporting Travellers in their schooling. The mentor works with AEN pupils to develop organisational skills.

Role of School Support Team

The School Support Team is representative of all groups caring for pupils in the school. The team meets weekly to discuss pupils and their needs. An "in/out" list is compiled which communicates to staff the support level needed that week for pupils. This is an important support for our AEN pupils, in particular.

Admission Arrangements

The Enrolment Policy of Terence MacSwiney Community College has been formulated in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998, the Education welfare Act 2000, the Equal Status Act 2000 and the EPSEN Act 2004. We strive to be a fully inclusive school. No child will be refused admission for reasons of Ethnicity, Additional Educational Needs, Language skills, Traveller status, Religious or Political beliefs. In offering children a place in the school, the Board of Management must also respect the rights of the existing school community. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of all children. Considerations would be:

- available space in classrooms and Health and Safety requirements
- Availability of teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Skills
- The ability of the school to cater for the educational needs of children
- Maximum class size directives

The Board of Management believes that the admission criteria should not discriminate against pupils with AEN, however it may be necessary to defer enrolment of a particular child depending on the school's suitability in meeting the child's needs and the availability of necessary resources specific to the psychological and/ or medical report supporting the child's application for a place.

SECTION B: IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND PROVISION

Identification

Early identification of pupils with AEN is a priority.

- Feeder schools are contacted to identify any incoming AEN students
- A meeting is organised between Principal, AEN Team and staff members of feeder schools to identify the strengths, weaknesses and needs of AEN students.
- Micro Test scores are made available to the school from primary schools
- The NEPS Continuum provides templates to support the transition process.
- Schools are visited where necessary to obtain extra information on AEN pupils
- An expression of concern from parents and / other agencies regarding pupil progress may result in an assessment of needs.

Assessment

- Prior to entry, students sit an entrance test comprising a range of appropriate tests.
- In the first term all first-year students are further assessed by the AEN Team liaising with the JCSP Librarian and class teachers. Tests include GRT11, WIAT-111, GAP, WRAT Maths, Accelerated Reading Star Testing, PPAD-E.
- Children with specific needs are further assessed if deemed necessary by the AEN Team.
- Assessments are arranged through NEPS, private psychologists and NBSS.
- Further assessment of students throughout their time in the school is carried out as needed. Students are assessed for literacy/ numeracy levels and for RACE (Reasonable Accommodations in Certificate Examinations)

AEN Provision

- The AEN Team through consultation with class teachers and subject teachers will monitor progress on a regular basis with continual observation, assessment and recording of any difficulties being experienced by the pupil.
- Students deemed most critically in need of support will be referred to the NEPS service
- The Principal will consult with NEPS and organise an AEN Team meeting to plan the school year.
- Following assessment and identification of needs, an application for funding is presented by the Principal to the Department of Education and Skills
- The Principal is responsible for organising the timetabling of AEN teaching/ SNA supports. This is done in consultation with teachers and the Assistant AEN Co-ordinator.

Intervention Programmes

- The school offers the JCSP and LCA programmes.
- Resource Teaching 1:1 where possible is offered to students with weak literacy/numeracy/social skills.
- Counselling services are made available when deemed necessary. The Student Support Team plays a major role in highlighting students needing support.
- Team-teaching is provided where possible.
- In-class support is available where deemed necessary.
- A range of Literacy/Numeracy programmes are offered as part of the JCSP Programme.
- SNAs work closely with AEN pupils.
- Traveller Support Mentors support Traveller students.
- A paired Reading programme is offered to students.
- School Completion (Le Cheile) support students when necessary.
- NBSS staff are very involved in supporting pupils with AEN. A Behaviour For Learning classroom is provided by NBSS.
- Assistive Technology is used where appropriate with AEN pupils.
- The use of iPads in the school provides an additional range of learning options for AEN pupils.

Transfer to Post-Primary

To assist with transition, an AEN team meeting is set up with the feeder school when the student is in sixth class. A programme for Transition is implemented. The Principal will request copies of any Additional Educational Needs Assessments to be forwarded to the school as soon as possible prior to the child commencing in September. Copies of Micra/Sigma test scores are also to be forwarded by the primary school.

Record Keeping and Storage

The role of CAST Coordinator includes the gathering and updating of records of Additional Educational Needs students. Copies of students' psychological assessments are available for teachers to read from the CAST Coordinator. A summarised folder listing the AEN needs of pupils is available in the Main Office. A folder recording the work done with each AEN pupil is kept by their Resource Teacher in the AEN office. This can be consulted by subject teachers. Copies of assessments are kept by the Guidance Counsellor/ AEN Coordinator. At the start of the school year teachers will be given information on the AEN pupils in their classes. As the year progresses new information will be disseminated.

Resources

There is a wide variety of resources available within the school for students with AEN. These include Laptops, iPads, a large selection of ICT software, Rainbow Reading Programme, Catch-up Literacy, Hi-Lo readers, audiobooks, literacy and numeracy games, phonic games and programmes in addition to a variety of differentiated worksheets on a range of topics.

A school library is provided by the JCSP and is available for use by all students including those with AEN. A JCSP Librarian is employed to run the library. In the main office the "signpost " folder is available to teachers and outlines the varying AEN conditions. A dedicated Resource Room and office have been developed to support students learning. This has a comfortable seating area and work areas for students to engage in their work.

Professional Development

The school is supportive of staff availing of professional development. A graduate Diploma course for AEN and Learning support is offered annually by Third level institutions. The Special Education Support Service also offers ongoing courses. NEPS also offers training.

Equality of Access and Participation

The school has been designed to be fully accessible for wheelchair users. Ramps are in place within and outside the school for easy access. A wheelchair accessible toilet is available in the school building.

Individual Education Plans

IEPs are considered good practice and include the following:

- Short term targets
- Teaching strategies
- Provisions made
- Review date
- Success criteria
- Outcomes recorded at review.

The IEP will only record that which is different from or additional to the normal differentiated curriculum. It will concentrate on 3 or 4 individual targets that closely match the pupil's needs. The IEPs will be discussed with the pupil and parent. IEPs will be reviewed annually. The school will endeavour to hold the reviews in an informal manner and parents' views on their child's progress will be actively sought. Students' opinions will also be sought. Folders holding these records of targets set and work done will be maintained by the Resource Teachers (student record folder)

Curriculum Access and Inclusion

At Terence MacSwiney Community College we adopt a whole school holistic approach to AEN policy and practice. Every effort is made to ensure that AEN pupils have full access to the curriculum and that they are fully integrated into school life.

Evaluating Success

The success of the school's AEN policy and provision is evaluated through

- Progress of pupils with AEN in our school
- Analysis of pupils' test results
- Feedback from teaching staff, Student Support Team, pupils, parents, educational psychologist.
- Annual Review meetings.

SECTION C: PARTNERSHIP WITHIN AND BEYOND THE SCHOOL

Staff Development

Staff training and development is essential for the successful inclusion of students with AEN

- All staff are encouraged to attend courses that help them to acquire skills needed to work with AEN pupils.
- There is a reference section on AEN in the school library and in the main office for teachers.

Links with other Agencies, Organisations, and support services

• The school recognises the important contribution that external support services make in assisting to identify, assess and provide for AEN pupils. The following are involved with AEN pupils when necessary:

- Educational psychologists (NEPS)
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Hearing impairment Service
- Visual impairment Service
- AEN Support Service (SESS)
- Occupational Therapist
- Guidance Counsellor
- School Completion Team (Le Cheile)
- Behaviour Support Service (NBSS)
- Student Support Team
- HSCL teacher
- Education welfare Board (NEWB)
- Springboard
- Foróige
- Social Services
- CAMHS (Mental Health Service)
- UCC Disability unit
- AHEAD
- Jigsaw

Partnership with Parents

Terence MacSwiney Community College /Gaelcholáiste Mhic Shuibhne firmly believes in developing a strong partnership with parents and that this will enable students with AEN to achieve their full potential. The school recognises that parents have a unique overview of the child's needs and how to support them. Parents have a key role to play in the partnership.

Implementation Date: August 2021

Review Date: Policy to be reviewed annually.

APPENDIX 1 - Role of the Special Needs Assistant

Note: This information is an Appendix attached to Circular 07/02, and as such is the most recent clearly defined role of the Special Needs Assistant.

Duties are assigned by the Principal Teacher in accordance with circular 10/76:

"Duties and Responsibilities of Principal Teachers "and sanctioned by the Board of Management.

Their work should be supervised either by the Principal or by a class teacher.

Those duties involve tasks of a non- teaching nature such as:

1. Preparation and tidying up of the classroom(s) in which the pupil(s) with special needs is/are being taught.
2. Assisting children to board and alight from school buses. Where necessary travel as escort on school buses may be required.
3. Special assistance as necessary for pupils with particular difficulties e.g., helping with physically disabled pupils with typing or writing.
4. Assistance with clothing, feeding, toileting and general hygiene.
5. Assisting on out-of-school visits, walks and similar activities.
6. Assisting the teachers in the supervision of pupils with special needs during assembly, recreational and dispersal periods.
7. Accompanying individuals or small groups who may have to be withdrawn temporarily from the classroom.
8. General assistance to the class teachers, under the direction of the Principal, with duties of a non-teaching nature. (Special Needs Assistants may not act either as substitute or temporary teachers. In no circumstances may they be left in sole charge of a class).
9. Where a Special Needs Assistant has been appointed to assist a school in catering for a specific pupil, duties should be modified to support the particular needs of the pupil concerned.